LIFE

OF

ARMELLE NICOLAS,

A POOR

MAID-SERVANT in *France*, &c.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

ERRATA.

Page v. line 20. *read*, as he, in his wiſdom.
5. 13. ſhould *inſtead of* ſhculd.
12. 8. in *inſtead of* to.
20. 29. once *to be eraſed.*
23. 19. *read*, all places, to a ſoul which.
26. at noon *inſtead of* at one.
25. 23. *read*, ſtir *for* ſlir.
30. *read*, backward but by his orders.
32. children *for* childeren.
26. 16. knew *for* know.
22. riſe *for* raiſe.
27. *read*, other thought to interrupt this.
27. *laſt line* murmur *for* murmer.
28. 31. than a fly *for* then a fly.
29. 21. If *to be eraſed.*
25. *read*, If *for* Or.
36. 23. *read*, all my life long.
32. *laſt but two*, *read*, with a veneration of God, becauſe all her geſtures and deportment ſhewed that her ſoul was the temple of the Holy Ghoſt.

N. B. The following ſheets were printed while the Editor was abroad.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LIFE

OF

ARMELLE NICOLAS,

COMMONLY CALLED

The GOOD ARMELLE;

A poor MAID SERVANT

In *FRANCE*,

Who could not read a LETTER in a BOOK,

AND YET

A noble and happy SERVANT

OF THE

KING OF KINGS.

BRISTOL:

Printed by S. FARLEY, in CASTLE-GREEN.

MDCCLXXII.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

To all that uſeful part of mankind who are providentially employed in the Station of SERVANTS, *of whatever kind or degree.*

The following TRACT *is affectionately dedicated.*

TO you I need ſay nothing more by way of dedication, or preface, than ſingly to recommend the due peruſal and application of the following hiſtory of the life of one of your worthy predeceſſors; as I think that would prove a matter of ſolid and laſting advantage to every one of you. In regard to thoſe whom Providence has exalted, in this ſhort life, into the ſtation of Maſters or of Lords, of Miſtreſſes or of Ladies, I wiſh they may ever have it at heart to be juſt, humane, kind, tender-hearted; and to obſerve the golden rule of acting, toward thoſe in inferior ſtations, as they would deſire their ſuperiors, or governors, to act toward them, if it were their lot to be placed in the like ſtations; timely conſidering that we ſhall all ſtand on an equal footing, when arraigned before the great tribunal of impartial juſtice. If croſſes and afflictions be neceſſary, during our ſojourning here, (as undoubtedly they are) to our ſanctification, let it be left to GOD to adminiſter ſuch as divine wiſdom ſees to be the beſt for us, as they will be the moſt conducive to that deſirable end.

THE hiſtory of the life of ARMELLE NICOLAS was written by a female, who had had a long and very intimate acquaintance with her.

THE following epitome will, I doubt not, be a valuable tract to all who regard the great concerns of eternity; as it is conciſe and comprehenſive, and well adapted to draw the attention to the one thing moſt needful; as it breathes the true ſpirit of piety, inwardly felt, and outwardly manifeſted.

THE French hiſtory takes up two volumes in duodecimo; the firſt containing above 550 pages, the ſecond above 350; but is ſo very circumſtantial on minute points, ſo particular about days and years, and what paſſed in them, as would make it (if the tranſlation were to follow the original) far too tedious for the generality of Engliſh readers, and tend to carry off all the real benefit of the beſt parts. The main ſubſtance of it I thought well worthy of publication in the Engliſh language; and hope it will be both acceptable and uſeful to many.

IN the firſt volume, in the original, are 29 chapters: In the ſecond 24. The tranſlation is alſo divided into chapters, for the conveniency of giving proper pauſes in the peruſal of it.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

HER manner of life, while with her parents, till ſhe was about twenty-two years of age. Her firſt place of ſervice, in which ſhe reſided two years.

II. SHE enters another houſe, in the town of *Ploermel*; in which ſhe patiently undergoes great hardſhips, impoſed on her by her miſtreſs.

III. IN the fifth year of her reſidence here her miſtreſs relents, ſees her fault in having been ſo unjuſt and cruel, and endeavours to make amends for it in treating her with the kindeſt indulgence.

IV. SHE removes from *Ploermel* to *Vannes* with her maſter's daughter newly married; where ſhe undergoes a purifying privation, which continues two years: Her happy ſtate after her coming out of it. Her bodily weakneſs.

V. SHE reſides a year and a half in the monaſtery of the *Urſulines*: Growing uneaſy there, ſhe goes back again to her former place of ſervice, and continues there all the reſt of her life.

VI. DEATH of her miſtreſs. ARMELLE has her leg broken by the kick of a horſe. Her patience under pains. Her reſignation to GOD. The happy concluſion of her life.

The Female Author of the following Hiſtory begins her PREFACE *thus:*

" IT is ſo very rare to ſee erected, by the hand of " GOD, a perfect model of inſtruction, both for the " learned and the ignorant, in the perſon of a poor " country girl, who never knew A or B, and who " paſſed her whole life in the ſtation of a ſervant; that " having met with ſuch a ſingular event in the life of " ARMELLE NICOLAS, I thought I could do nothing " better than try to render the knowledge of it more " extenſive, even in countries where it has never yet " appeared."

AFTER her Preface and Epiſtle follow ſundry approbations of her work: After them teſtimonies on behalf of ſaid ARMELLE, to the number of ten; the laſt of which is that of her maſter, with whom ſhe lived a ſervant thirty-five years: He repreſents her as one who, during all that time, had given a moſt compleat and wonderful example of every kind of goodneſs; viz. indefatigable induſtry, prudence, patience, fidelity, charity, inward dependence on GOD, and reſignation to his will, in all ſtates, and under all ſorts of trials.

AFTER above a hundred pages begins her life, of which the following is an Abſtract.

LIFE

LIFE

OF

ARMELLE NICOLAS.

CHAP. I.

THIS truely happy virgin was born the 19th of September, 1606, in the pariſh of *Campeneac*, near the town of *Ploermel*, in the biſhoprick of St. *Maloes*, in the province of *Bretany*, in *France*. Her father's name was GEORGE NICOLAS, and her mother's FRANCES NEANT. Though but ſlenderly furniſhed with the gifts of fortune, they feared GOD, and were zealous for his holy ſervice. And this child was a bleſſing to them, and to many others too. She was their firſt-born. After her they had another daughter, and four ſons. From her early age ſhe was inclined to ſilence and ſolitude. Wherefore, when ſhe grew up her mother ſent her to tend the ſheep, and other cattle. Here ſhe retired to ſome corner of a hedge, while her little companions were intent on play and diverſion. Even then did the LORD attract and unite her to himſelf

ſelf by many infuſions of tenderneſs and ſweetneſs, enjoyed in her little devotions.

When ſhe was of age to attend her firſt communion ſhe made all poſſible preparation for it, and longed for the arrival of the day. Receiving this divine ſacrament ſhe felt herſelf ſo ſmitten with love, that ſhe could have wiſhed for it every day. But, as in the country frequent communions are not uſual, ſhe was, for the moſt part of her time, deprived of her deſire. The more ſhe grew in age the more this deſire encreaſed. She watched all opportunities of ſatisfying it. She often applied to ſome Prieſt to give her the holy communion, at whatever time and place ſhe might be leaſt perceived. And ſome there were who ſometimes invited her to it of their own free motion, or rather that of God, who incited them thereto, to ſatisfy the deſire of his faithful handmaid. And indeed ſeveral occaſions of this kind might paſs for miraculous.*

So great was her ſympathy with the ſufferings of her fellow creatures, that in her repaſts ſhe often deprived herſelf of what ſhe liked beſt, and even of the whole, to give it to the poor. Often ſhe denied the cravings of thirſt, or of relaxation, with the ſame deſign. So ready was ſhe to ſerve and ſuccour every body, with affection and charity, that many loved her, and had recourſe to her in their neceſſities or diſtreſſes; ſo obedient to her parents, as never to cauſe them the leaſt diſpleaſure, inſomuch that they loved her more than all their other children.

When

* I am very unwilling to give the leaſt offence to any tender minds. The Apoſtle Paul writes, that *to the pure all things are pure*; the ſecret bent of the heart being the object of the Almighty's regard. Amelle was innocent, honeſt, and zealous in the eſtabliſhed prejudices of the nation in which ſhe lived; and of the religious community of which ſhe was a member.† What renders her memory valuable, worthy to be reſcued from oblivion, and expoſed for a light to many thouſands, is her being a bright example of pure practical chriſtianity.

† Viz. Tranſubſtantiation, &c.

WHEN she had attained the age of twenty, or two and twenty years, they wanted her to marry, and solicited her to it exceedingly; which she was never willing to hear of. Soon after a good young gentlewoman, who esteemed her highly, had a great desire to take her into her service; and for that purpose earnestly requested it of her parents, who at first would not hearken to such a proposal; but at length seeing she continued so urgent, and likewise their daughter joining in her desire, they gave their consent, though not without great regret: both for the loss of her endearing company, and of the great services she performed for them.

WITH this gentlewoman, living at *Ploermel*, she seemed to herself to be delivered from a great burden, being now no more obliged, on holidays and Sundays, * to attend at country dances and assemblies, to which her companions had sometimes taken her as it were by force, she having a very great aversion to them; which had made her quite weary of the country. Beside, she had more frequent opportunities of hearing the mass and sermons; which she had greatly desired, the word of GOD being dear and precious to her.

HER mistress was so well pleased with her company and her services, that she was as fond of her as if she had been her own child, never blaming her for any thing, except working too much; for though peaceable, she was active, of a healthy constitution, and would dispatch as much work as two others. In the mean time her father dying, her mistress gave her leave to go for some days to console and assist her mother: And yet, as she could not be happy without her, she desired her to return as soon as possible; which she did. Though she met with nothing but affection and kindness from without, she laboured under an increasing uneasiness within. After having lived here two

* Holy-days and Sundays, very improperly so called! These days in Popish countries, after hearing a mass, are prophanely spent in sports and diversions, by the common people, who are encouraged to it.

years ſhe deſired her diſcharge, and with no ſmal difficulty obtained it, her miſtreſs offering both to raiſe her wages, and to diſcharge her from a part of the work of the houſe, ſo loth was ſhe to part with her, and ſo willing to keep her on any terms that would be moſt agreeable to herſelf, but in vain. She returned to her mother in the country, who joyfully received her. Her relations ſolicited her again with much importunity to marry; but her mind was turned quite another way. Beſide, ſhe had not here the conveniency of hearing maſs, or being at the communion, ſo frequently as in the town; to which, after having reſided here four months, ſhe therefore returned; where ſeveral were deſirous of having her in their ſervice, from the excellent character, which, by her conduct and fidelity, ſhe had acquired.

CHAP. II.

IN leſs than four months ſhe tried three new places; but indulgence and kind treatment did not ſeem to anſwer the ſtate of her mind. Her inward ſatisfaction was gone; anxiety and agony of ſpirit had taken its place. About this time GOD preſented her with one, proper for the accompliſhment of the deſigns which he had upon her. Here ſhe had no expectations given her of an eaſy place, but quite the contrary; yet ſhe felt her mind moved to think this her right place: And ſo it proved. For here the LORD put his hand to the work, to lay the foundations of that high and great edifice of perfection, and to adorn and embelliſh that temple which his MAJESTY had reſerved for himſelf, to be the throne of his love, the place of his habitation and of his delight.

IN this houſe they were accuſtomed every evening, after ſupper, to read the lives of Saints, or ſome other ſpiritual book, which gave her great pleaſure, with an ardent deſire to join herſelf to the companions of CHRIST.

Day

Day and night she could think of nothing else but the means of becoming like them. She often desired one of the daughters of this family, who has since become a Nun among the *Ursulines* of that town, to read for her; which she willingly did. GOD also provided ARMELLE with a director, well acquainted with the ways of the spirit. Happening one day to go to him to confess, after her confession she felt herself strongly inspired to declare to him all the condition of her soul. He encouraged her much to be faithful to GOD, to resign herself entirely to his conduct; and offered to assist her with his best ability, bidding her come freely to him whenever she should need his assistance.

AFTER this, she underwent great spiritual conflicts; through which she was preserved stedfast in the fear of GOD, though in great distress of mind, till it pleased him in his tender compassion to cause the rays of his divine light to shine into her heart, and to fortify it with his grace; and hereupon she renewed her solemn covenant, in humble thankfulness, with him. She prostrated herself, both body and mind, before the LORD, and in the presence of the sacred virgin, and of all the celestial court, whom she most assuredly thought to be present at this spectacle of pure love, devoted and offered herself entirely to the service of his divine MAJESTY, made a vow of perpetual chastity, which she always kept with an angelic sanctity and purity, notwithstanding the great assaults and strange accidents which attacked and tried her deeply. Thus ended this happy day, which she used to call *the day of benediction and conversion.* Knowing well that the most certain and prevalent means of attaining a still greater union with GOD was the solid practice of the virtues of life, she applied herself thereto with all her might; watchful to let no occasion slip of shewing her meekness and patience, of humbling herself, of obeying, of surmounting herself in every thing, to draw down the divine mercy and favour upon her soul.

As a ſtone, moved ever ſo little from its center, returns to it with greater impetuoſity, ſo ſhe, ever ſo little taken off from the only object of her love, burned with the more ardor and vehemence to return to it. She fell ſick, and ſo continued for five or ſix months, having a fever without intermiſſion, which reduced her to very great weakneſs and languor. Her miſtreſs began to be weary of ſeeing her always out of health, and perſuaded herſelf that ſloth was the ſource of her maladies, and that cloſe and hard labour would be the beſt remedy for them. She was confirmed in this way of thinking by a perſon of piety, who, coming to viſit her, had met ARMELLE ſo recollected, and retired in herſelf, as to take little or no notice of her, whereby ſhe was offended. She conceived an unfavourable notion of her, and imputed her diſorders to an indiſcreet devotion: She ſaid to her miſtreſs, "If ARMELLE continues thus, ſhe will go out of her ſenſes, "as ſhe is now making great ſtrides toward ſuch a "ſtate." Hereupon her miſtreſs, fearing that event in her houſe, made her work inceſſantly, and forbad her all her devotions. She exerciſed and haraſſed her in ſuch a manner, that I had it from the miſtreſs's own mouth (telling it by way of diverſion) "that if ARMELLE were a Saint, ſhe had contributed a good deal "to it; and that if any one writ her life, there would "be enough ſaid of herſelf in it; but that ſhe could "not help it, nor could ſhe have acted otherwiſe." Which indicates that it was a ſpecial conduct of GOD for ARMELLE's ſanctification.

BEFORE this, her employ was only to take care of the children: But now, beſide that, ſhe was put to every thing moſt fatiguing in the houſe. From morning 'till evening ſhe had no reſt allowed her. Often ſhe fainted away under her labour; her miſtreſs attributed it all to vain imaginations and idle pretences. But this was not all: Whatever ſhe did, her miſtreſs ſtill found fault with it, to which ſhe never made any reply, ſuppreſſing every movement of impatience or reſentment

reſentment, which the other attributed not to virtue, but to ſtupidity, and on that account only deſpiſed her the more.

ONCE the fever, joined to her conſtant hard labour, had weakened her to ſuch a degree, that ſhe could keep up no longer, but was conſtrained to lie down. Short was her repoſe. Her miſtreſs, after giving her a good reprimand, made her riſe and work, reproaching her, and telling her that her ſloth and folly made her fancy herſelf ſick; that ſhe hated work, and had recourſe to contrivances to ſhun it. She commanded her inſtantly to carry out dung on her head into the garden. Her very heart ſhivered with horror at the hearing of this order, having at the ſame time violent pains in her head. Yet, without making any reply, ſhe went like a poor lamb, and was kept to this employ for two days, which were the moſt painful days ſhe ever felt; becauſe every time ſhe loaded her head ſhe ſeemed to feel as many thorns run into her head as there were hairs on it. But the conſideration of our SAVIOUR's crown of thorns gave her ſome courage to ſupport it. If every thing were compleatly well finiſhed about the houſe, her miſtreſs would rather have invented the moſt diſagreeable employment for her than let her have a moment's reſpite.

OFTEN about her work ſhe reproached her with her little ſenſe, tho' ſhe did every thing with dexterity, neatneſs, and in a becoming manner. At firſt ſhe felt theſe reproaches, eſpecially when they were made before company, and before ſtrangers; for, tho' ſhe was of a low condition, ſhe had a noble and generous heart, ſuſceptible, in ſuch caſes, of ſhame and confuſion: But to ſurmount herſelf in that, as in every thing elſe, GOD permitted that when there was moſt company, then her miſtreſs exclaimed againſt her the moſt, at which ſhe felt a ſecret joy; and even at ſuch times was the more forward to preſent herſelf before her miſtreſs, the more to mortify herſelf.

HEREBY

Hereby her heart became greatly fortified with grace, as appears from the discourses which she used to make when she spoke hereof, which were to the following purpose.

"It seemed to me that all I endured was as nothing "in regard to the desire I had to suffer, after the ex- "ample of my Saviour, who presented himself con- "tinually to me for a model: For on every occasion "he inwardly instructed me, as a master does his "scholar; and I was so attentive to hear his voice, "and so ready to execute his directions, that I little "regarded whatever was said or done to me, keeping "myself as it were shut up within myself with my "divine Love, whose presence at this time I never lost. "I even rejoiced to suffer any thing for his love, be- "seeching him to give me a high degree of the virtue "of patience, which he himself had practised through "the whole time of his life.----Whenever my trouble "was the greatest, I retired with speed to hide myself "in the wounds of my Saviour, who was my hiding- "place and refuge, and then I would have defied all "Hell to hurt me, so much strength and courage I "received; and all I suffered seemed to me no more "than a straw by a great fire."

She saw well that, without a special assistance of the divine Majesty, she could never have subsisted among so many grievous crosses, without losing all patience. But she was as peaceable and calm as if she had had every satisfaction in the world, receiving with joy, meekness and humility, all the bad treatment she daily and hourly met with; and thinking so meanly and poorly of herself, that she looked upon it all as only too good for her. She acknowledged it all to be the pure favour of God to her, as often she declared to me with tears in her eyes. It melted her into love and thanksgivings to her great benefactor.

The

THE daughter before-mentioned, who loved her exceedingly, and pitied her much for what her mother made her ſuffer, often read to her in *Thomas a Kempis* of the imitation of JESUS CHRIST. Almoſt every time ſhe opened the book, it was in the chapter which treats of patience, and how we ought to imitate that of our SAVIOUR, to which ſhe liſtened as if that book had been writ for herſelf only; and from hence roſe her great deſire of ſufferings.

AT laſt, after a fever of five or ſix months, it pleaſed GOD to reſtore her to health, but not to take from her the merit of ſufferings: For then her miſtreſs forbad her to go to maſs except on holydays and Sundays, retaining the fear before infuſed into her, viz. "that "her often doing that would make her loſe her ſenſes." She hearing of it ſmiled in herſelf, ſaying, "No, no, "I am no more out of my ſenſes ſince I have found my "divine Love, and ſince I love him with my whole "heart. Formerly when I ſought him abroad, without "myſelf, I was not right in my ſenſes." It indeed at firſt gave her ſome pain to be forbidden to go to church: Yet ſhe fully ſubmitted to it, eying her miſtreſs as if ſhe had been CHRIST himſelf, punctually obeying all her commands. She never complained of her miſtreſs, but only told her confeſſor of her inward ſtate, trials and ſufferings, deſiring him to aid her in thanking GOD for doing her the favour to puniſh her for her ſins in this life, and giving her the means of ſuffering ſomething for the love of CHRIST. Once her confeſſor told her that ſhe might quit this place; "How my father, *ſaid ſhe*, would you adviſe me to "ſhun the croſs which GOD has ſent me? No, no, I "will never do it unleſs you abſolutely command me "to do it. Were I to ſuffer a thouſand times more, "I will not go out 'till they put me out by the "ſhoulders." Her confeſſor was exceedingly pleaſed with her firmneſs and conſtancy, and encouraged her ſtill more and more to purſue it.

THE

SATAN

SATAN however tried by all sorts of artifices to draw her out of this place. One while he represented to her, "how she was beloved and caressed of her relations, "the ease she had had in the other houses where she "had lived; the continual toil and fatigue she had in "this; that if by force of labour, now being young, "she became infirm, who then would take care of "her for the rest of her days? That she would be cast "off and miserable; and that if death followed, she "would be accounted before GOD the murderer of "herself."

THIS was not all the brunt she had to sustain on this occasion. Her dear and affectionate mother often furnished her with others; for, seeing her so spent and emaciated, and hearing from other people of the hard labour she had in this house, she besought her with tears to leave it, and come to live with her; but she consoled her mother, assuring her that she was quite well in this place. Sometimes the enemy put it into her mind that "if an Angel from Heaven were treated "in such a manner, he could not forbear returning "an answer; and that as to the rest she was the cause "of her own hardships; for if once she properly shewed "her resentment, her mistress would be more cautious "of imposing on her; that her silence was not ac-"counted any virtue, but mere insensibility." To all these insinuations she turned the deaf ear. Tho' she had the best reasons in the world for her own justification; tho' she were entirely innocent of all they accused her of, and scolded her for, never would she make any reply; but heard it all with admirable calmness and silence. All the time she was in this Gentlewoman's service she did not do any action, or utter any expression, which discovered the least fault; which she attributed to the singular favour of GOD, observing farther that, "in such cases, one cannot think how "much it concerns the soul to stand firm, and to grant "nothing to humour or passion; that the least slip one "makes herein often causes an entire deviation, or at

"least

"least a delay of advancement toward perfection; that "for her part, if she had not acted thus, the Devil "had without doubt conquered her; and that there "often needs only one word to give him entrance into "a soul."

As the enemy could not prevail on her to quit this place, he incited her mistress to turn her away. She threatened her for a long time with doing it. ARMELLE was not at all moved by the threat. "Well, "my GOD, *said she in herself*, thy will be done! If it "is thy pleasure that I be turned out from hence, with "that I am content; but I, on my part, will not pro- "cure it, so long as I shall find wherewith to suffer "for thy love." Several times she saw herself on the verge of her departure, her clothes packed up, and herself just ready to go off, when some providential obstacle interfered to prevent it. Thus had she passed on betwixt four and five years in this house. She was much esteemed and beloved of every one in it except the mistress, whose husband often chid her for it, and said, "she did very wrong to treat in such a manner a poor "girl who rendered her every kind of good services, "and that for his part he pitied her." But she had neither eyes to see, nor heart to conceive any thing of it, and wondered how any body could love her, or approve of what she did; GOD so permitting it for the great good of his handmaid, whom he was willing by this means to purify and refine, as gold in the furnace of sufferings. She often said, "If GOD had not treated "me thus, I should have been dead long ago. What "would have made others sick was the support of my "health."

CHAP. III.

TOWARD the end of the fifth year, her miſtreſs diſcovered what had long been ſo very manifeſt to all beſide herſelf, which fell out in the following manner, as I had it from her miſtreſs's own mouth.

ONE day in the ſummer, being in the country, ſhe had a mind to bathe herſelf. She took with her this good maid; and being on the brink of the water ſhe perceived ARMELLE all recollected, and retired to herſelf, without ſaying a word to her: She, falling on her in a rage, ſaid to her, "Well, thou great fool, what "art thou dreaming about now?" She, like one ſuddenly awaked out of a deep ſleep, anſwered with great mildneſs and ſimplicity, "I was thinking on the ex- "treme anguiſh and affliction which had pierced the "heart of the Son of GOD, when he paſſed over the "brook *Cedron*,* of which this water reminded me." And who learned thee, *ſaid the miſtreſs*, that the Son of GOD paſſed the brook *Cedron?* She replied, "I "don't know, but I am aſſured he paſſed it." This pierced her miſtreſs to the heart. She diſcovered what before had been hid from her. The conduct of ARMELLE, which had before this been inſupportable, henceforward appeared to her in a quite different light. Her ſilence, meekneſs, patience and ſubmiſſion, which ſhe had always attributed to ſtupid dullneſs, and which had cauſed ſuch a ſeries of cruel uſage to the poor girl, now took far other titles, and were acknowledged for real virtues. Now, loving and eſteeming her highly, ſhe gave her full power to act according to her own diſcretion, in all affairs of every kind. She felt a violent remorſe for having made her ſuffer ſo much. Often has ſhe ſaid ſince this change, that GOD had blinded her toward ARMELLE, in order to contribute to the ſanctification of her ſoul.

ARMELLE

* John xviii. 1.

ARMELLE alſo on her ſide loved her miſtreſs very tenderly; and both acted before her, and ſpoke of her, with the greateſt reſpect, even at the very time when ſhe was treated by her with the greateſt ſeverity; and whenever ſhe ſpoke of her miſtreſs ſince that time, it was as of one to whom, next after GOD, ſhe thought herſelf moſt indebted, by reaſon of the great benefits and ſpiritual advantages ſhe had received through her means. She would ſay, "ſhe could never forget the "obligations ſhe lay under to her, and that both in "this world and the next ſhe ſhould ever pray to the "LORD to reward her for all the bleſſings ſhe had "received from her." She generally called her *her good mother*. Often have I heard her ſay, with tears in her eyes, and in the deepeſt ſenſe of gratitude, "Yes, ſhe "is my true mother, for ſhe has helped me to find "the true way: And if I could give her the very "blood of my veins to do her any ſervice, I would "gladly do it."

AND now what is remarkable in this part of her life is this; in the time of her hardeſt perſecutions, the Devil with all his artifices had never been able to prevail on her to demand her diſcharge from this houſe; but now that every thing was rendered both quite eaſy, and highly favourable to her in it, ſhe became deſirous to leave it; whereupon her miſtreſs made her all the offers poſſible to prevail on her to continue with her; but ſhe ſtill perſiſted in her reſolution of departing thence as ſoon as her year ſhould expire. In that time the eldeſt daughter married a Gentleman, who commonly reſided in a houſe he had in the country near *Vannes*, being his native ſoil; his new ſpouſe deſired her mother to give her this good maid to take care of her houſe. She conſented to her importunity with reluctance, regretting her being deprived of ſo faithful a ſervant, tho' it was to ſatisfy the earneſt deſire of her daughter.

As for ARMELLE herſelf, ſhe the more readily conſented hereto, as it would remove her farther from her relations and acquaintance, that by the diſtance from, and oblivion of theſe, detached, as it were, from every thing, ſhe might the more freely and entirely give herſelf up to the love and ſervice of GOD, which was her only deſire. Moreover her relations were ſtill ſoliciting her to marry: Wherefore ſhe thought GOD had preſented her with this opportunity of diſengaging herſelf from their importunities, and of having more enjoyment of him in ſolitude.

THE day of her departure from *Ploermel* being come, ſhe felt an extreme joy at her ſetting off, yet mixt with ſorrow at leaving her good miſtreſs, and the houſe in which GOD had done her ſo many favours, and where ſhe had ſo abundantly felt the effects of his mercy. All who knew her in this town were ſorry for her departure, but particularly thoſe of the houſe ſhe had lived in, and moſt of all the children, who were paſſionately fond of her, as ſhe had always taken great care of them. Her mother was the perſon who had the greateſt pain to conſent to her daughter's removing to ſo great a diſtance, as ſhe both loved her exceſſively and hoped for aſſiſtance and conſolation from her, being now a widow and advanced in age. The daughter, deſirous to give her the beſt conſolation in her power, freely gave up to her all that ſhe had to come to herſelf from her father, beſides all ſhe could ſpare from her earnings in ſervice, reſigning and referring herſelf to the care of Providence, in whom ſhe had a perfect confidence. Thus fortified, ſhe took leave of her native country, and came to *Vannes*, at about twenty-nine or thirty years of age.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

SOON after her arrival here, she commenced the experience of a rigorous passive purification, which continued two years.---I shall not enter into a detail (as I think it would be agreeable to very few readers) of the sad succession of heavy and stunning trials, of gloomy apprehensions and terrors, of her dread of separation from GOD, and loss of everlasting happiness, wherewith she was continually haunted during that time; but hasten to the view of that brighter state which followed it, and continued to the period of her days. She would sometimes say, "When the soul is "blest with the approbation of GOD, and experiences "the effects of his grace, every thing which can befall "it is rendered easily supportable: But when GOD re- "tires and leaves it to itself, when it seems at every "step to fall into what offends him, without being "able to avoid it; oh! then it is that such a soul is "worthy of compassion indeed, as its sufferings are "deep and grievous, without any support or hope."

AT length having gone out into a field to deplore, without being seen or heard by any body, her miserable condition, as to her it then seemed, here she was filled with the sudden renewed sense of the love of GOD, setting before her in a clear light all his gracious designs toward her, even from her past trials, and the secret supports he had afforded to her under them. She was overcome by this divine visitation, saluting her so unexpectedly, to such a degree, that, from the overflowings of love and gratitude, she poured forth a flood of tears; most ardently desiring to live henceforth to the LORD alone. She continued about two hours in rendering to him thanksgivings, inviting the holy Virgin, with all the Saints in Heaven, and all creatures on earth, to help her in praising him for all his unspeakable favours to her. After which she returned to the house, but in a state

a ſtate far different from that in which ſhe had come out of it.

It had ſeemed ſometimes to give ſome comfort to her mind, in her dark ſtate, to reflect that before ſhe removed to *Vannes*, ſhe had conſulted her director, and had his conſent and approbation. Often ſhe thought, if ſhe had not had that, ſhe could not have ſubſiſted in it. Now ſhe became deſirous again of meeting with ſome good director, and her maſter recommended her to one who ſuited and was of ſervice to her. She rejoiced greatly at her having met with ſuch an one. She entreated him with tears to ſpare nothing that was required, that God alone might be maſter of her heart, to have regard neither to life nor health, nor conveniency; neither to her honour, nor ſatisfaction, or to any thing whatſoever, but to this one great point only, as ſhe was reſolved on punctual obedience to every duty diſcovered to her, coſt what it would; that all nature in her might be ſubdued, and nothing but pure grace, without any mixture, be left to have the dominion there.

She had before this laid open to him all her diſpoſitions paſt and preſent, with ſo much clearneſs, humility, diſcretion, and prudence, that he was quite aſtoniſhed, and in a rapture to hear a poor villager expreſs herſelf in ſuch a manner. Her body being reduced to a weak ſtate, from the great concerns of her ſoul, her director got her removed to the town, to the houſe of a very pious widow, whither he brought ſome phyſicians to ſee her, and ſome good perſons who were greatly edified by her converſation. After ſome time ſhe returned, grew better, and recovered ſtrength ſufficient for employing herſelf in houſehold occupations, in which, as ſoon as ſhe had the leaſt health, ſhe laboured indefatigably, and could have wiſhed to do alone the whole work of the houſe. She overdid her ſtrength, whereby ſhe relapſed. Thus in frequent maladies ſhe paſſed three or four years.

The

THE wiſdom and goodneſs of GOD appeared wonderful in introducing her into a way ſo remote from that in which till then ſhe had walked. He gave her gradually ſuch intelligences as facilitated to her the entrance into it, when there was not one in the country with whom ſhe was acquainted, whom ſhe could freely ſpeak to on the ſubject: Yet his divine providence conducts all things efficaciouſly. She could ſpeak of this, as one well experienced both in the one way and the other. She diſcovered a great deal of mixture, and of human, in the former; which made her ſay, that "wherever any thing of the creature is found, "ſo much there is of defect and imperfection, which "ſouls meet with in their progreſs. It is that they are "not willing to leave GOD alone to act, but always "want to have a part with him in what he does: that "in regard to herſelf, her firſt manner of acting had "been neceſſary for her, in order to conſume and de"ſtroy, by the ardent flame ſhe felt toward GOD, all "that was diſagreeable in his ſight; that to ſuch ſouls "as he attracts thereto, at the beginning this is of great "advantage; and that we cannot enter too early into "that life which makes us die to ourſelves; but that "the number of ſuch is ſmall; and I think the reaſon "of it, *proceeded ſhe*, ariſes generally from two ſources: "the one, a want of truſt in GOD; the other, that ſouls "are not willing to die to themſelves, there being few "that are willing to oppoſe and ſubdue their own im"perfections and faults, to that pitch of fidelity which "the divine light makes known to, and requires of "them."

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

AT this time our houſe wanted a *Touriere*,* having only one who alone was not ſufficient for the ſervice of it, inſomuch that we applied to ARMELLE's confeſſor, to have one of his training, having a great confidence in him; and he, who had a great affection for our community, thought he could not ſerve us better than in procuring us this virtuous maid. He ſaw her continual occupations were a great hindrance to the recovery of her former health and ſtrength; and we, having heard much ſaid of her virtue, were exceeding glad to have her in our houſe: But her maſter and miſtreſs could not agree to it. They reſented exceedingly her going out from them, made great complaints of it to that father, and ſignified to him that their reſentments would be of as long duration as her abſence from them. As for the good ARMELLE, ſhe was perfectly obedient, ready to do whatever ſhe was commanded.

AFTER ſhe came into our houſe, ſhe began by little and little to gather ſtrength. We took a ſingular liking to her from the rare virtues we remarked in her, and endeavoured to give her all the relief in our power, not willing that ſhe ſhould labour in any thing which might affect her health. She demeaned herſelf with ſo much virtue, ſilence, modeſty and ſubmiſſion, that all our Nuns were exceedingly edified therewith. Several often begged leave to go to talk with her, and were delighted to hear her ſpeak of GOD, and of his holy love, eſpecially on the days when ſhe had communicated: One would have thought one ſaw and heard St. CATHARINE of *Sienna* or *Genoa*. In this condition ſhe paſſed very contentedly about a year and a half, in which time ſhe recovered her health greatly. It ſeemed as if this was the deſign for which GOD brought her hither.

* A drudge in a Nunnery.

hither.---She was employed in the ſervice of the boarders, of which ſhe acquitted herſelf with ſo much reſpect, tho' ſhe was only a ſervant, that they feared as much to diſpleaſe her as their miſtreſſes. Her very preſence and the modeſty which appeared in her countenance were ſufficient to retain them in their duty. This was a great relief to the Nuns who had the care of them, when on any occaſion they were obliged for ſome time to leave them out of their ſight: For they well knew that if ARMELLE was there, all would go as well as if they were preſent themſelves.

IF any of them neglected their duty, or ſhewed any obſtinacy or bad humour, which is common enough among children, ſhe inſtructed and counſelled them in private, watching the opportunities when her words might have their effect, which ſhe did with ſo much delicacy, charity, and cordiality, that ſhe gained on their little minds all ſhe wiſhed for, and cauſed to flow into their hearts ſentiments of piety and devotion, inſtilling into them good principles of virtue fit for every condition of life, which they might happen to meet with, and which has ſucceeded in ſeveral of them with very good effects.

SHE was careful that nothing ſhould be wanting to them for their uſe or ſervice; and did every thing with ſo much order and calmneſs, that one would have ſaid ſhe had nothing to do. Her devotions were ſo regular, that they did not hinder her, in the leaſt, from acquitting herſelf of every part of what her labour required. I may ſay, all the time ſhe reſided in our houſe one never diſcovered in her any word, or action, with any mark of the leaſt fault: On the contrary, the true and ſolid virtues in her were ſo conſpicuous, as to gain her the love and eſteem of all that knew her.

IN our houſe every thing was made as eaſy to her as poſſible, from the great love every one had for her: But whatever was agreeable to nature, as eaſe and con-

tent, ſhe was afraid of. It did not anſwer her deſire of ſuffering like CHRIST her Lord and Saviour. She thought ſhe felt her old inclinations and paſſions, which had been ſubdued, in danger of riſing again. Her livelineſs of ſpirit toward GOD ſeemed to be flattened; and that conſtant familiar intercourſe, which before ſhe had had with him, to be ſlackened. All this made her think our houſe was not the place in which GOD would have her to continue; in which ſentiment ſhe was more and more confirmed, till at length it became a fixed aſſurance: And GOD, who conducts affairs to ſerve his own deſigns, furniſhed her with means very reaſonable for removing from us: For that gentlewoman with whom ſhe had lived had not ceaſed, ſince ſhe left her, to try all poſſible ways to get her back again; but without effect till this time; that being big with child, and very much indiſpoſed, ſhe greatly feared leſt ſome bad accident would befall her in her lying-in. One day ſpeaking to the Confeſſor aboveſaid of this apprehenſion, ſhe told him, "If ſhe could have her ARMELLE near her at that time it would be a great conſolation to her." Hereupon the father adviſed her to aſk our Prioreſs for her; as he thought ſhe would not refuſe her on ſuch an occaſion. She, emboldened by this aſſurance, came immediately to the Prioreſs, and made her requeſt with ſuch earneſtneſs that ſhe granted it; hoping ARMELLE would afterwards come back again. But when ſhe once had her in her houſe, never once after would ſhe conſent to her quitting it. Nor did ARMELLE herſelf deſire any more to leave it, having evident proofs of its being her right place; and of the will of GOD that ſhe ſhould be there.

INDEED her Confeſſor, and our mother's, often ſolicited her to return; and the love ſhe had for the houſe, and the deſire to ſerve it, were powerful motives to incline her to it; but the will of him who ruled her heart and life prevailed far above every thing beſide. The love and eſteem ſhe preſerved, all her life long, for our houſe, were very manifeſt. It was the uſual place of her

her visits, whether she came to give vent to the flames of divine love which burned in her heart, in the familiar discourse she had with some pious Nuns. All in the house preserved also, on their side, a great love for her, caused by the high esteem they had for her virtue. She prayed for our community. Often affected with gratitude, she said she should never forget, either in this world or the next, the kindnesses she had received therein. Oftentimes she pleasantly called it *her house*, and *her place of refuge*; "because, *said she*, it is the house of my father who is GOD: And children use to confide in what belongs to their father." At length seeing that she was no more to live there, for the love of our LORD, and with great humility, she asked our Mother Prioress to be, after her decease, interred in some corner of our chapel: Which was readily granted by her, and by the whole community.

CHAP. VI.

ARMELLE, now reinstated in her former place, was of very great service therein, and a bright example in all her conduct. In October, 1656, her mistress died, after a painful illness, which had held her eighteen months; during which time she had rendered her every manner of assistance in her power, with such assiduity, that she left her neither by day nor night, but for things absolutely necessary. She afterwards came to see me. I asked her whether, during the long illness of her mistress, and of the rest of the family, one or other of whom were for the most part indisposed, she had not been at some times overtaken with weariness and impatience, seeing they all had recourse to her cares; and often she was almost as weak as those very persons whom she was obliged to tend. She answered me, "Not at all through the mercy of my

"GOD, whoſe goodneſs to his poor creature is ſo great, "and who holds me ſo entirely ſubjected to his empire, "that nothing ſtirs or moves in me but by his orders."

AFTER this, as ſhe was paſſing along the ſtreet, by the kick of a horſe ſhe was thrown down on the ground, and her leg broken. For this ſhe immediately thanked GOD: And tho' ſhe ſuffered exquiſite pains, which continued with her till her death, ſhe never ſhewed any ſign of impatience or inquietude through them all; which cauſed admiration in all that ſaw her ſuffer with ſo much chearfulneſs. One who had been to ſee her told me at his return, "If an Angel had a body, "and had the leg broke, he could not ſuffer with a "better grace than the good ARMELLE:" And ſo thought every one that ſaw her. She deſired them to thank GOD for the great favour which, through his goodneſs, he had conferred on her. It was above fifteen months before ſhe could go out. There fell a humour on the other leg, and gave her almoſt as much pain as that which was broken.

ALL this time ſhe was on the bed, or ſat in the chair; and they carried her to maſs only on holidays and Sundays. The reſt of the time ſhe ſtayed in a little corner of the kitchen, to give orders about the houſehold buſineſs; and employed herſelf in one thing or other for the utility of the houſe, being never idle. Several perſons of all ranks went to ſee her, all of whom were much edified by her holy converſation and her great patience.

TOWARD the end of the year ſhe began to walk in the houſe with crutches; which, to her, was a cauſe of great ſatisfaction and thankfulneſs. One day in 1669, three years after her fall, ſhe was carried to hear maſs; where, after paying her devotion, ſhe on a ſudden miraculouſly recovered the uſe of her legs, and afterwards walked eaſily in the houſe, or in the ſtreets, with only a ſtaff, till near her end.

SOON

Soon after this she came to see us, and could not tell how enough to celebrate this miracle, and to invite us to join with her in praising the LORD for it. Informing me of her state, she said, "I know not what "to say, but that the mercies and favours of GOD, "who is my love and my all, are unutterable and infi-"nite. He dwells in my soul, and condescends to "rule there as my Sovereign. I have no will or desire "for any thing whatsoever, unless he gives me it. "My will is destroyed, and I have none but his. "Thus I pass the days and the nights, if he does not "turn me to some particular object." I asked if she had not been troubled at being so long deprived of the holy communion, since her leg was broke, as she used so diligently to attend it every day before. She replied, "To suffer for love is better than to enjoy "love. Then she added as follows: "Oh, how well "GOD knows how to give himself at all times, and "all places, which has no desire for any thing else but "himself only! Formerly it seemed to me impossible "to live without receiving my divine love in his holy "communion: But now I am, through his grace, in "a perpetual union with him." Oh happy state, a blessed end of her labours and sufferings! Thus she continued, till the 24th day of October, 1671, between twelve and one o'clock at one she peaceably expired, and left the sweet odour of her excellent spirit and exemplary life, as a rich perfume on the minds of many who had been witnesses thereof, and who now had no doubt of her being gone to enjoy forever what she had some years before spoken of in the following terms; viz. "I have nothing to do "here below. Nothing keeps me here but the will of "my GOD: For on my part I have done what he had "required of me; and am entirely ready to go when-"ever it shall please him; for he sent me into this "world only to love him: And, through his great "mercy, I have loved him so much that I cannot "do it to any higher degree, after the manner of mor-"tals. I must go to him to do it after the manner of

"the

"the bleſſed in heaven. Betwixt God and me there "is nothing but the frailty of this poor body, ſo weak-"ened by the ſtrength of love that a ſlight blaſt is "ſufficient to deſtroy it, and thereby to open the way "for me to go immediately to him who poſſeſſes all "my love."

SHE was interred according to her deſire, with great ſolemnity. Her funeral was attended by a vaſt concourſe of people, (of the four pariſhes of the town of *Vannes*) whoſe hearts at that time appeared to be deeply affected with a ſenſe of the many real excellencies of this faithful and devoted handmaid of the LORD.

The ſecond Volume, of the life of ARMELLE NICOLAS *in French, contains only the diſplay of her virtues particularly ſpecified, with her expreſſions at many different times and on many occaſions, from which a few extracts, I think, deſerve a place here: And firſt of all the following Journal.*

A Journal of ARMELLE NICOLAS's daily manner of life.

"NEVER did I ſo ardently aſk for any thing, as "in the prayer which I put up to God every day, "that he would be pleaſed to admit me into his "ſchool, among the number of his diſciples. How "well, Oh! my God, haſt thou accompliſhed what I "aſked! Thou haſt taken me into thy ſchool, and "admitted me into thy company; yes me, poor "ignorant as I am. Thou haſt learned me more in one "day than all the men in the world could have done "in my whole life. Since that time I conſidered my-

"ſelf

"ſelf as a diſciple of Chriſt, a ſcholar of his holy "ſpirit. I was attentive to his command, ready and "careful to execute it, as a willing ſervant or ſcholar "does in what his maſter orders. While doing it, I "had my view fixed upon him to imitate what he had "done in this world. If it were any thing which he "had not done, he ſhewed me how to do it in the "manner which was moſt agreable to him.

"Thus in all things, both great and ſmall, he "inſtructed me. Even he himſelf, through an excels "of goodneſs, condeſcended to guide me. He let me "ſee that I was like thoſe young ſcholars, who are "beginning to learn to write, to whom the maſter "not only gives a fair copy, but even guides their "hands to learn them rightly to form their letters. "Thus very often I felt another hand which as it were "guided mine. Oh how that mark of kindneſs and "care inflamed my heart with love to him! This did "not paſs in the imagination or fancy. It was a real "and pure truth which I ſaw more clear than the day. "Beſides this, he reproved me for all my faults; ſo "jealous was he over me, to render me quite perfect, "in ſuch ſort that I durſt not ſtir a hand, make a "geſture, caſt a look, or utter an unprofitable word, "but at the ſame inſtant I was reproved; and that "with ſo much exactneſs that nothing eſcaped his "divine notice: Wherefore having diſcovered that, "I kept myſelf ſo upright, and had ſo great a fear of "diſpleaſing him, that I dared not to go forward or "backward by his orders, and all through love for "him. He ſeemed like to thoſe fathers who love "their childeren ſo tenderly that, they cannot ſuffer "in them any thing which diſpleaſes them. Often "when, in haſte and hurry, I was juſt going to ſay or "do ſomething, I found myſelf ſtopt ſhort on a ſud- "den. I ſaid to myſelf, to ſay or do ſuch things in "the preſence and in the view of thy love, who ever "has his eye upon thee, Oh it is what ought to "give thee very great fear and care!

"Thus

"THUS it ſeemed to me that I was the child of love, "and that he was my father, who led me by the "hand to every thing I ſhould do. It was my daily "care and practice to attend him from morning 'till "evening, from my firſt waking 'till my going to "ſleep again. Even in my labour with him I enter-"tained myſelf. I loved him and rejoiced in him. "I treated with him as my moſt intimate friend. And "if any occupations were preſented which required "all the attention of my mind, I had nevertheleſs "my heart turned toward him: And as ſoon as they "were finiſhed, I ran to him again, as a perſon does who "is paſſionately fond of another. Such was my ALL, "from whom it ſeemed impoſſible for me to ſeparate "myſelf. I could not live but in his preſence; for "I know well, he himſelf taught me it, that ſo long "as I ſhould duely regard him I could neither offend "him, nor forbear to love him.

"THE more I beheld him the more I knew his "divine perfections and my own nothingneſs and "miſery; in ſuch ſort that I forgot myſelf, as unwor-"thy of attention, to raiſe above myſelf and above "all created things, in order to unite and attach my-"ſelf to him only. My whole bent was to pleaſe him "in every thing I did, and continually to keep the "ſtricteſt watch not to offend him. I admitted no "other to interrupt this, which I did not do to obtain "the benefit it brings, or avoid the ſad conſequences "of its neglect; all views of ſelf-intereſt were ſo "remote from my mind that I did not think on them. "It was divine love only which inflamed and en-"groſſed all my heart. When I found he was pleaſed. "I was happy. Without that, all the charms of this "life to me were nothing.

"As ſoon as I waked in the morning I threw myſelf "into the arms of my divine love as a child does into "thoſe of its father. I roſe to ſerve him, and to "labour to pleaſe him. If I had time for prayer

"I fell

"I fell on my knees in his divine presence, beg-
"ging all his holy will might be accomplished in
"me, and that he would not permit me to offend him
"in the least thing. In him I occupied myself as long
"as the other occupations of the day permitted.
"Very often I had not leisure to say the LORD's prayer
"all the day; but that gave me no concern. I
"thought it as much my duty to work for him as to
"pray to him, because he had shewed me that all
"that is done out of love to him is a true prayer.
"In his company I dressed myself, and he shewed me
"that he furnished me wherewith to dress myself.
"When I went to my work he left me not, nor did I
"leave him. He wrought with me and I with him.
"Oh how sweetly does work go on with such good
"company! By him all my pains and fatigues were
"well paid. From thence I drew so much strength
"and courage that nothing seemed difficult to me.
"I wished to do alone the whole work of the house.
"I concluded that I had my body only for work, and
"my heart for love, with which it burned in that
"endearing familiarity with him, wherewith he was
"pleased so amply to favour me.

"When I was at my meals, I enjoyed the repast in
"his divine presence, as well as I did every thing
"else. It seemed to me as if every morsel were dip-
"ped in his precious blood, and that himself thus
"gave it to me to nourish me both in body and soul,
"still more to inflame me with his love. I leave you
"to think what effects this must operate in my mind.
"Oh without doubt they are beyond conception, and
"there is none but he who can tell them. As to poor
"me, were I to employ my whole life therein, I could
"never do it.

"If in the course of the day, amidst the hustles,
"hurries and incessant hard labours of it, the body
"felt any pain or weariness, ready to complain or
"murmer, or to take its ease; if I let myself be

" touched with anger, or any other movement of ir-
" regular paſſion, my divine love inſtantly enlightned
" me, and ſhewed that I muſt entirely ſlay every ſuch
" rebellion of corrupt nature, and by no means allow
" them any life either by word or action. This love
" not only kept the door of my lips, but ſet a guard
" over my heart, that nothing might contribute to
" nouriſh any irregular motions there; ſo they were
" forced to die at their birth.

" But if at any time I was not enough on my
" guard, and let myſelf by ſurprize be moved into any
" fault, alas, I could have no reſt 'till I had obtained
" my pardon, and my God was reconciled to me. I
" proſtrated myſelf at his holy footſtool, weeping before
" him. To him I confeſſed my faults as if he knew
" them not, owned all my weakneſs, and thus continued
" 'till pardon was granted, and his friendſhip con-
" firmed more than before, which through his great
" mercy and goodneſs conſtantly followed, whenever I
" ſlipt into any fault: And that ſerved ſtill more and
" more to inflame my heart with gratitude and love
" toward him.

" When men perſecuted me with their ſlanders and
" their ſcorn, or evil ſpirits with their temptations, I
" immediately had recourſe to my love, who ſtretched
" forth to me his ſacred arms, ſhewing me even his
" heart and wounds open for my protection, in which
" I found my ſafe and impregnable fortreſs, where I
" was ſtronger than all the infernal powers combined
" together. If all creatures had then riſen up againſt
" me, I ſhould have feared them no more then a fly,
" the mighty God being the ſafeguard of my ſoul.
" If ſometimes he hid his face, and ſeemed to with-
" draw, I ſaid to him, *Oh it is no matter: Conceal thy-
" ſelf from me, yet will I ſerve thee not the leſs for it:
" For I know thou art my* God; then I tried to keep
" on my guard more ſtrictly, and to be more faithful
" for fear of diſpleaſing in any thing my beloved.

" That

"That indeed was my only fear. At theſe times I "more fully diſcovered my own poverty and miſery, "and confided more and more in my LORD, being "content with being in that condition all the reſt of "my life if he pleaſed. But he did not leave me in "it; and if I may uſe the expreſſion, it ſeemed as if "he could not forbear careſſing me any more than I "could live without him. For, after a ſhort abſence, "at his return he heaped on me ſo many favours, with "ſuch divine and tender affection, that I ſcarce knew "how to contain them. To help me to ſupport them "he often made me quit every thing, to hide myſelf "in ſome retired place, in order to diſcharge my heart "by the tears and the praiſes which I rendered to his "divine majeſty. I was even afraid of the exceſs of "his kind endearments, when I cried to him that it "was not his careſſes and favours that I aſked for, "but himſelf alone without any thing elſe. I was "obliged to admit and receive them ſince ſuch was his "bleſſed and heavenly will.

"IF on holidays and ſundays after I had heard maſs, "I returned to my houſhold affairs; and did not ſtir "from them all the day long, tarrying within to ſend "the other ſervants to the veſpers and the ſermons. "Or any wanted on theſe days to prevail on me to "join with them in their vain diverſions, I excuſed "myſelf, infinitely preferring the enjoyment of thoſe "which my love gave me, which were ſo much the "greater and more delicious, as I was the more ſepa-"rated from all other converſation. And when they "wondered at ſeeing me ſtill all alone in the houſe, "I ſaid in myſelf, *Oh if you knew the moſt glorious com-"pany which I have, ye would be far from thinking of "me as you do. I am never leſs alone than when I appear "moſt to be alone.*

"AFTER this manner paſſed my days, as well the "working days as holidays, in which I often had no "leſs work than the others. But that was as nothing

" to me, to whom labour and reſt, hard work and " eaſy, every thing was indifferent; as I did not look " on what I had to do, but on him for whoſe ſake " I did it. His love ſo engroſſed my whole heart, " that I had not any leiſure to conſider myſelf, or any " thing elſe but him alone.

" When the evening was come and every one " went to reſt, I found mine only in the arms of divine " love. I fell aſleep on his holy breaſt, as a child " does on the boſom of his mother; ſtill loving and " praiſing God, till ſleep ſeized me. Often this love " waked me again, and ſo ſtrongly impreſſed all my " ſenſes, that I paſſed a great part of my nights with- " out ſleeping, and ſpent it all in the embraces of that " lovely grace which never left me, but watched, and " was always attentive to ſuch a vile worthleſs creature " as I am.

" Such has been my life for theſe twenty years paſt, " without ever perceiving the leaſt diminution of the " love which he poured into my heart, at the very time " of my entire converſion. Nay, on the contrary I " have obſerved its daily increaſe, tho' every day it " ſeemed impoſſible to admit any addition to what I " already enjoyed. But truely it is an infinite love " with which I find myſelf nouriſhed and ſatisfied; ſo " that every day I have a new hunger, tho' methinks I " can receive no more than what I poſſeſs already every " moment."

The author of the account of her life informs us, that for a long while ſhe could bear no other diſcourſe but of God and his holy love. " I cannot imagine, " *ſaid ſhe*, how a ſoul created for Heaven can be con- " cerned about the droſs of this world." Her common diſcourſes were always holy and edifying. If ſhe happened to be in company where the ſubject of the diſcourſe was vain and unprofitable, ſhe had a wonderful faculty of giving it ſuch a handſome turn as

to

to change it to ſomething good and truely uſeful. She uſed to recommend ſilence to keep the thoughts together in the center of the heart, as the beginning of union with God, raiſing the affections from earthly things and fixing them on heavenly objects. "We "ought, *ſaid ſhe*, to loſe our familiarity with the "creatures if we deſire to enjoy the converſation of "the creator, a moment of which affords more delight "and ſatisfaction than all the fineſt diſcourſes in the "world."

When a certain perſon aſked her, whether ſhe did not know ſuch a ſtory with which the town rang at that time, ſhe anſwered, "No; and gave God thanks "that ſhe never knew any thing of the news of this "world, nor deſired to know it. But, *ſhe ſaid*, ſhe "knew a great deal of the love and mercies of Al-"mighty God: For this was all ſhe deſired to know, "and wherewith her heart was entirely taken up; "that ſometimes indeed ſhe enquired after the news "about heaven; as is the cuſtom when one deſigns to "go into a country to live there, one enquires of the "inhabitants, and of ſuch as live there already, how "they do there, and what way one muſt take to come "thither. So I ſometimes converſe with ſaints and "angels, all whom I eſteem as my own brethren, "enquiring how they do in my father's houſe and "country, where, through his great mercy, I hope to "live to all eternity. Such is the only news I enquire "about, and that not often: For my divine love ſel-"dom permits me to occupy myſelf in any thing elſe "but himſelf alone."

So much for her obſervance of the firſt and great command of heaven to mankind, *To love the* Lord *her* God *with all her heart and ſoul and ſtrength*: Her obſervance of the ſecond kept pace with it. The love of her neighbour viz of all men, enemies as well as friends, in ſeeking to do them good on every occa-

ſion

ſion which fell in her way, or was preſented to her mind, both to their bodies and more eſpecially their immortal ſouls, was extraordinary and unwearied, of which inſtances are given too numerous and large to be here particulariſed. When ſhe looked upon the happy ſtate ſhe had attained, and the ſevere doom awaiting the multitudes of profligate wretches ſhe felt a moſt tender and commiſerating love; her very bowels yearned with compaſſion and with earneſt deſire of their timely flight from the wrath to come. She uſed on this occaſion ſometimes to ſay, "She ſeemed to "herſelf like one that had been in a great ſtorm at ſea, "by ſtreſs of weather like to be caſt away every "minute, who, getting at laſt ſafe and ſound aſhore, "could not but remember the dangers her brethren "and near relations were expoſed to, being toſſed up "and down in the huge ocean, and left to the mercy "of the roaring billows. Alas! *ſaid ſhe*, thus it is "with me when I lay to heart the danger ſinners run "themſelves into: For the more endearing marks of "divine grace the LORD has been pleaſed to beſtow "upon me, the more fervent is my deſire that others "alſo might partake of the ſame with me."

OF the modeſty, gravity, and ſolemnity of her external appearance and deportment the aforeſaid author obſerves, that her carriage and countenance indicated ſomething divine and ſupernatural, and as if GOD were manifeſt in every thing ſhe did, and in all her motions, in ſuch ſort, *ſays the ſaid author*, "that I have heard "ſeveral perſons ſay, if they had not had the belief of "a GOD, it had been enough for them to behold the "countenance of the good ARMELLE to convince them "that there is one." Others ſaid, that the leaſt motion ſhe made proclaimed to them "GOD is here." In truth it had been difficult to ſee her without being moved, and ſeized with a veneration of GOD, and the temple of the HOLY GHOST; inſomuch that, tho' ſhe was only a poor ſervant, one ſaw nevertheleſs a certain Majeſty

Majeſty ſhine forth in her, which induced people to judge that her ſoul amply partook of the divine perfections.

All her movements were ſo adjuſted, that thoſe who have moſt frequently been with her have declared, "they never ſaw any part of her conduct in the leaſt "irregular, or which favoured of any paſſion;" a very evident proof of the great empire ſhe had acquired over herſelf, conſidering her trying condition of a ſervant, which often furniſhed her with occaſions of the contrary; being obliged to take care of every thing which paſſed in the houſe, to watch that all did their duty, to whom alſo all addreſſed themſelves to get what they wanted, from the leaſt to the greateſt; all whom ſhe ſatisfied with ſo much ſweetneſs and modeſty, as nothing on earth could exceed.

In her moſt preſſing occupations ſhe was as attentive to God as if ſhe had nothing to do. Several times have I heard her ſay, that one of the things which ſhe endeavoured moſt to avoid was eagerneſs and trouble amidſt her occupations; as ſhe often had them in ſo great a number, and ſo many different perſons to anſwer and ſatisfy at once: Nevertheleſs God had wonderfully aſſiſted, and born her up, ſo as to maintain her in a ſtate as calm as if ſhe had nothing to try or aſſault her. "I applied myſelf, *ſaid ſhe*, to every thing, "as if it had been the only one I had to do, without "any eagerneſs or precipitation, becauſe divine love "directed me; for indeed but for that it had been "impoſſible for me to avoid it, conſidering the con"tinual hurries I was in; and yet not the leaſt thing "failed of being done in the due ſeaſon."

Going along the ſtreets ſhe walked in ſuch an humble compoſed frame of mind, as conveyed edification to all that obſerved her. From her very carriage every one conceived an eſteem of her ſanctity. She never turned her head on one ſide or other to gratify any curioſity.

rioſity. She neither ſtopped at the ſight of any body, nor ſpoke to any unleſs it were neceſſary, holding on her way, as if there had been none but God and herſelf in the world. She was ſo affable that no body coming to ſpeak to her ever met with any repulſe or rough look; and yet ſo holy and worthy of veneration, that if any one coming to her had any emotion, reſentment, or anger, it was diſſipated and quieted preſently by her ſole preſence. Some have aſſured me that they could not look at her, or be in her company, when their conſcience was preſſed with certain faults, which they were not willing to quit, becauſe her very look ſtruck them with remorſe. Others have told me that being aſſaulted with ſome paſſion they had no better remedy to ſurmount it than to figure to themſelves the angelic countenance of the good ARMELLE.

HER ſpirit was ſo equal that one never perceived any change in her countenance. She was always the ſame happen what would. Whether ſhe were in health or ſickneſs, labour or reſt, eſteem or blame, ſhe ſcarce ever changed through all the changes which befell her, becauſe her heart was above them all.

THIS modeſty which accompanied all her actions was conſpicuous alſo in her dreſs which, tho' coarſe and homely, was nevertheleſs very clean and neat. Her linen, after ſhe had worn it a fortnight or three weeks, appeared almoſt as clean as the firſt day ſhe had it on. One aſking her if ſhe had not ſome vanity or ſelf-love in the neatneſs and cleanneſs of her linen, ſhe replied, "Ah, no: If I knew that my heart had the leaſt vain "attachment to theſe trifles, I would rather caſt all the "clothes and linen I have into the fire, and be only "covered with rags; but through the goodneſs of "God it does not deſcend into ſuch folly, nor admit "ſuch thoughts." She loved ſilence much, ſaying in herſelf, "To love *(or to drink in the love of)* God is "better than to ſpeak." So ſhe was ſilent to the creatures, in order to converſe with the Creator. "The

"ſoul,

" ſoul, *ſaid ſhe*, which is truely in love with God thinks " all its force and faculties too little for loving him; " ſo is not willing to loſe any part of that love in words, " or to let it evaporate in diſcourſes. On the contrary, " it carefully keeps itſelf ſo collected within, as to wiſh " all that is without were converted and changed into " divine love.

It may be ſaid that her life, like that of *the juſt*, was *a life of faith*.* In the abundance of communications which God imparted to her ſoul, with ſo much effuſion and plenitude, as ſhe ſometimes experienced, ſhe would ſay, " My God, thou knoweſt " that I ſeek nothing but thyſelf. Give then thy ca- " reſſes to them who know thee not, in order to attract " them to thee. As for me, oh my love, 'tis enough " that I know thou art my God, to make me burn " with thy love. She durſt not fix her mind on any of " the views or ſentiments which God communicated to " her, becauſe, *ſaid ſhe*, all that we conceive, how " ſublime ſoever, is not God. We ought to go on " further, for fear of attaching ourſelves to any thing " elſe but him."

Her holy truſt and confidence in him aroſe gradually to ſuch a height as to render her undaunted. Often ſhe ſaid, " If Heaven and Earth ſhould be diſ- " ſolved I ſhould not be afraid: And if all men, and " devils too, conſpired to my deſtruction, I ſhould " have no fear; knowing I have God for me, who will " defend and keep me. I am ſo well aſſured of his " goodneſs, that nothing will befall me but what will " tend to his glory; which is the only thing I deſire " both in this world and the next."

She looked higher than men or ſaints. She ſaid, " If the King were my father, I would not go to beg " the aſſiſtance of his valets, nor hope for my happi-

* Heb. x. 38.

" neſs from his ſubjects; but rather would depend on " the ability and the will which he would have to do " me good. With much greater reaſon ought I to " hope for every thing (good for me) from my God; " who has been pleaſed, in ſo many inſtances, to make " me ſenſible that he has adopted me into the number " of his children."

She even thanked God that ſhe could not read, when ſome expreſſed their wiſhes that ſhe had learned it, as it would be a great means of advancement toward perfection. But ſhe had recourſe to the Lord and ſaid to him, " Oh my Love, my All, to thee I offer the book " of my conſcience. Thou knoweſt that I cannot read " in any other book than that. Vouchſafe to take it, " turn over its leaves, examine it fully, efface what- " ever is not pleaſing to thee, and inſcribe all that is " agreeable to thy holy will." She ſaid, " I could " not forbear thus preſenting to him the book of my " conſcience: And he, on his ſide, preſented himſelf " to the eyes of my ſoul as a great book, in which I " ſaw and learned, as in the twinkling of an eye, more " ſublime and truely profitable learning than I could " have done all my life along, by the very beſt inſtruc- " tions of all the beſt qualified men in the world. So " I often ſaid to my teacher, oh how well haſt thou " known how to ſupply all the defects of my igno- " rance! For not being able to read in books, thou " haſt made thyſelf my book, my leſſon, and my maſ- " ter. In this book I met with all I needed; I read " in it (and delighted ſo to do) by night as well as by " day. Was it needful for me to ſuffer, to deny my- " ſelf, to conquer and ſubdue myſelf, to be humbled " in mortification, or active in duty? In that book I " read intelligibly the beſt way and manner how to do " it, to ſuch a degree, that I could not but execute " what was ſo divinely taught me in it. And I ſaw " clearly that this was infinitely the beſt of knowledge, " all other ſciences being of little value compared with " this."

It may be well ſaid that to her ſtate belonged two ſacred texts, one of divine command, the other of approbation; 1ſt. *Walk in my preſence, and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 1. 2d. *I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty; but thou art rich.* Rev. ii. 9.

FINIS.

NOW PRINTING,

In Sixpenny Numbers Monthly,

THE

LIFE of Lady *GUION*,

(For eſpouſing whoſe Sentiments the Archbiſhop of *Cambray* was baniſhed from the Court of *Verſailles*,)

Written by herſelf in *French*;

Abridged and tranſlated into ENGLISH:

Exhibiting her eminent Piety, Charity, Meekneſs, Reſignation, Fortitude, and Stability; her Labours, Travels, Sufferings and Services, for the Converſion of Souls to GOD; and her great Succeſs, in ſome Places, in that beſt of all Employments on the Earth.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

REMARKABLE ACCOUNTS

OF THE

LIVES of worthy Perſons,

Whoſe Memories were dear to Lady GUION.

*** The firſt Number is extant and may be had of the Printer hereof.

BRITISH MUSEUM